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SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/WHA, DS/IP/ITA, WHA/CAR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [JM](#)

SUBJECT: KINGSTON EAC REACTS TO DEMONSTRATIONS AND
ROADBLOCKS FROM GASOLINE TAX INCREASE

11. (U) This cable contains information that is sensitive, but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

12. (U) A number of sporadic roadblocks and demonstrations occurred today in Kingston, possibly in response to recent increases in gasoline taxes announced by the Government of Jamaica (GOJ). Jamaican police responded to the scene, quickly restored order and arrested some individuals. Several of the reported roadblocks occurred on or near Washington Boulevard, the main thoroughfare between Kingston and Spanish Town. In one incident along this road, police reportedly were forced to fire shots to disperse crowds. No reports of injuries have been reported from this gunfire. Most of these incidents occurred during the morning hours. These demonstrations were reported on Jamaican television and radio channels.

13. (SBU) In response, Embassy Kingston's EAC met in the afternoon of 4/28/09 to discuss today's situation. A security announcement was issued advising personnel of the days events, and encouraging them to monitor the news channels, avoid areas where demonstrations are occurring, and consider remaining inside during the evening hours. The Embassy issued a Warden Message using the same language as the security announcement. Post Management permitted post personnel to depart one hour early. The US Peace Corps Country Director issued similar information and warnings to all the Peace Corps Volunteers in country through their notification network.

14. (SBU) It should be emphasized that these are relatively small and sporadic demonstrations and road blockages, and that Jamaican police and security forces continue to have control of the streets. Yesterday, newspaper articles reported that Jamaican opposition groups planned to voice their displeasure with the GOJ's increase in gasoline taxes, and that vigils might be held also.

15. (U) Post continues to monitor the situation, and will advise of developments septel.

HEG